University of Alberta

Marie-Paule Monchaux's *L'esprit des mots*: An English Translation and Commentary

by

Kirsten Smart

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Translation Studies

Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2007

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395, rue Wellington
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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-29900-5
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-29900-5

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Lynn Penrod

Anne Malena

Patricia Demers

18 Dec 2006

Abstract

Translation is a journey of exploration that provides insight into language as well as culture. In this study, I have translated Marie-Paule Monchaux's *L'esprit des mots* into English. The original French text provides a unique translation experience since it discusses the significance of words themselves as artistic tools while marrying elements of French poetics with vignettes of prose. This stylistic hybrid allows Monchaux to capitalize on the richness of words, which combine both aesthetic and communicative aspects. Monchaux's poetically enhanced style of prose inevitably poses a unique challenge to the translator in terms of the multifaceted linguistic elements involved in her writing. In my commentary, I have applied the theory of semiotics, involving the sign and signifier, to the English translation of Monchaux's text. This provides evidence that the author's use of wordplay, poetic style, and intertextuality do carry over into English, thereby providing multiple insights into French language and culture as well.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Lynn Penrod, whose guidance and support have helped to make this thesis possible. I would also like to thank the department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies at the University of Alberta for providing a positive and enlightening learning environment.

In addition, I am grateful to my friends and family, and especially my husband, Sheldon Smart, and my parents, Brian and Pat Wood, for their love and support.

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Part I. Poetics as a Reflection of Culture in an English Translation of Marie-Paule Monchaux's *L'esprit des mots* : Commentary

It is interesting to consider the significance of poetry in contemporary western society and the fact that it is becoming less common to the average reader of modern literature. A possible explanation for this may be related to our instantaneous culture, where the general populace seems to lack the time and inclination to decipher the multifaceted aspects involved in reading such a challenging form of literature. However, French is a poetic language that provides a fertile ground for rhymes and wordplay. It is therefore important to emphasize the richness of the French language through literature that accurately expresses the language's unique qualities.

L'esprit des mots, by Marie-Paule Monchaux, which discusses the significance of words as artistic tools, responds to this dilemma by marrying elements of French poetics with vignettes of prose. This stylistic hybrid allows the author to capitalize on the richness of words, which combine both aesthetic and communicative elements, while simultaneously rendering her book more accessible to the public. Monchaux's poetically enhanced style of prose inevitably poses a unique challenge to translation in terms of the multifaceted linguistic elements involved in her writing. However, by applying the theory of semiotics, involving the sign and signifier, to an English translation of Monchaux's text, there is evidence that the author's use of wordplay, poetic style, and intertextuality do carry over into English, thereby providing multiple insights into French language and culture as well.

A discussion of semiotic theory provides a basic explanation of the components that make up language and provide insight into the potential to translate the literary elements in *L'esprit des mots* from French into English. Semiotics, "which involves the study not only of what we refer to as 'signs' in everyday speech, but of anything which stands for something else" (Chandler, 2), is at the core of language and is the component that allows a transfer of meaning to take place. The very concept of semiotics suggests that each word is associated with a sign, which is composed of the signifier, "the letters on the page or the sound that bounces off our eardrum" (Roth, Christine and Cary Henson, 1), and the signified, "the concept that appears on our brain when we read or hear the signifier" (Roth, Christine and Cary Henson, 1).

It is instructive to analyze the words discussed by Monchaux in light of their varying degrees of translatability. Although on a surface level the words that the author chooses to focus on seem rather arbitrary, through a closer examination, it appears that all of the words are related to themes that hold cultural and nostalgic significance; consequently, they can be categorized by their degrees of 'concreteness' or 'abstractness'. Some of the concrete words focused on by the author include: the colour of words, nature words, money words, and song words. In Monchaux's book, the relatively concrete words tend to be more readily translatable due to the fact that they are composed of referents that are tangible, and therefore, they more commonly exist in both French and English cultures. For example, the author discusses 'the colour of words' in terms of specific objects in our lives, which we associate with distinct colours. She begins

this section by evoking images relating to colour with the statement, "Quel arc-en-ciel, quel feu d'artifice d'expressions pour évoquer une impression visuelle qui n'existe que par la lumière!" (Monchaux, 28). The signifiers 'arc-en-ciel', 'feu d'artifice', and 'lumière', or the words themselves as they appear on the page, are directly translatable into English, respectively, 'rainbow', 'fireworks', and 'light'. Each of these words captures a familiar notion that evokes a concrete signified in our brains. Consequently, all of the concrete signifiers become signs that we associate with 'the colour of words', and the French passage is easily translated as follows: "The colours of words are rainbows and fireworks, exposing a beauty found only within light." The fact that concrete images are used facilitates the potential to translate the imagery directly from French into English successfully.

Despite the fact that concrete signs are typically more readily translatable, this does not hold true when considering culturally-specific details, such as the French drink, 'diabolo menthe' or the French candy, 'roudoudou'. Both of these words are problematic in terms of producing English equivalents since the signifiers and signifieds simply do not exist in English. The best strategy to overcome this challenge seems to be to provide parallels that hold similar significance in North American culture. The 'diabolo menthe' would likely translate to Mint Julep in English. Both drinks hold cultural significance and nostalgic associations for each culture. Although there is undoubtedly a loss, since the English reader is not presented with the French drink, the Mint Julep seems to be more effective in accomplishing the author's apparent goal, as indicated by the theme of the section, 'Nostalgic Words', by encouraging the

reader to reminisce through associations. Similarly, the French 'roudoudou', a hard candy similar to a sucker that simply does not exist in North America, is best translated in English as a 'jawbreaker'. Although it is undeniable that the word 'jawbreaker' does not have the same sensual flow as 'roudoudou', it definitely brings to mind a candy that is hard, and furthermore, it is distinct from any other variety of candy. Like the Mint Julep, the jawbreaker is a symbol that allows the reader to momentarily escape into memories through association. By providing English parallels for culturally-specific French words, there is an increased potential to provide a translation of Monchaux's book that maintains important poetic aspects of the original text.

Abstract words chosen by the author also pose an interesting challenge in terms of translation. Some of the abstract words discussed in Monchaux's text include: philosophy words, nostalgic words, empty words, indifferent words, and inner words. It is relatively difficult to find English equivalents for the abstract words, since their signs are intangible and concepts surrounding these words are likely to differ in the eyes of different individuals. Obviously, this challenge is magnified when transferred from one language and culture into another. An example of this occurs when the author, in discussing 'philosophy words', states that they "grattent, décortiquent la moindre idée, tentent de comprendre le pourquoi du comment. Ils cherchent, s'envolent ou retombent, se heurtant à la contradiction" (Monchaux, 11). Unlike words that are more concrete in nature, the concepts discussed in relation to 'philosophy words' involve more idioms and intangible elements that are more difficult to translate into English. However, an

effective solution seems to be to establish an expression with a culturally parallel meaning that has the potential to evoke similar emotions. The following passage provides an example of a possible way to translate the previous abstract use of imagery: "Philosophy words keep their nose to the grindstone, peel away the layers of every possible idea, and endeavor to understand the why of the how. They search, take flight, crash to the ground, and clash with contradictions." Although the verb 'gratter' could be translated directly to 'scratch', this English term simply does not convey the desired notion of 'working extremely hard'. Likewise, rather than simply translating the idea of 'décortiquer la moindre idée' to 'dissecting the slightest idea', the phrase 'peel away the layers of every possible idea' is more common in English and provides richer visual imagery. In a text such as *L'esprit des mots,* it is important to take the author's focus on poetic elements into account during the process of translation in order to preserve, as much as possible, her celebration of the French language.

Although it is subtle in *L'esprit des mots*, intertextuality is an important element in Monchaux's writing since it establishes a connection between her book and notable literary works that are significant either in French culture or on a global scale. The very title of the book, *L'esprit des mots,* is reminiscent of Baron de Montesquieu's *L'esprit des lois,* a book on political theory published in 1748 (Whitcomb, 1). In this political work, Montesquieu states: "Laws in their most extensive signification, are the necessary relations derived from the nature of things" (Montesquieu, 1). By replacing the word 'laws' with 'words' as Monchaux does in the title of her book, the reader gains valuable insight into the

author's apparent veneration for words in our society. This is one of the central reasons why it seemed appropriate to translate the original title, *L'esprit des mots* as *The Spirit of Words*. A second instance of intertextuality is a reference made to Karl Marx. In the section titled 'The Solitude of Words', Monchaux writes: "...Ceux qui veulent rester libres et maîtres de leur existence, sans entrave, pour évoluer et s'offrir les plaisirs qu'ils veulent, quand ils le veulent et comme ils le veulent" (Monchaux, 31). The English equivalent of this passage is, "...Those who wish to be free and to become masters of their lives, without restrictions, to evolve and indulge in the pleasures of absolute freedom whenever and however they choose." These ideas are embodied in an excerpt from Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, which states: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win" (The Communist Manifesto). Through this subtle reference, there is evidence that Monchaux is establishing links between the empowerment that comes through effectively expressing oneself through words.

The style of Monchaux's writing is also reminiscent of Charles Baudelaire's "Correspondances," a poem which suggests that there is a certain degree of unity between the natural, the sensory, and the spiritual elements of the universe. In his poem Baudelaire brings sensory imagery to life through personification: "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent" (Baudelaire, 63). This phrase implies that all of our senses, smell, sight, and hearing, are all interconnected. The poem also contends that there is a connection between humans and the natural world: "La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers/Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;/L'homme y passe à

travers des forêts de symboles/Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers" (Baudelaire, 62). Baudelaire's poetic words are used to emphasize the beauty of the imagery, or the signified, that is sensed through the connection we have with our environment.

Another unique aspect of Monchaux's poetic style in *L'esprit des mots* that should be observed is the physical arrangement of the words on the page. Although it is straightforward to maintain the visual arrangement of her writing in an English translation, it is not always possible to maintain her style of punctuation because the structures of sentences inevitably differ when translated from French into English. The author chooses to use different pattern breaks in her writing depending on the symbolic effect that she intends to create. For example, in the first section, "Pot-pourri et jeux de mots," the structure of each sentence is repeated in such a way that a poetic rhythm is established, which emphasizes the wordplay and provides a comic dimension. Although there was a certain level of loss when transferring the wordplay from French into English, it was possible to find English parallels that provide a similar effect. For example, in the original text, "Les mots d'amour sont des maux du coeur" (Monchaux, 6), can be translated to, "Words of love are the swords of lovers." Although this isn't a 'direct' translation, it maintains the flavour of the French, while incorporating the pun "swords", which contains "words", an element that parallels the French word "maux", which means 'evil', and sounds the same as the word "mots". Monchaux uses a similar structure for the section "Les larmes des mots", which

allows her to convey the image of the pitter-patter of tear drops that continue to fall with each successive phrase.

Another unique aspect of Monchaux's poetics is her unconventional use of punctuation. Unlike the visual arrangement of the writing on the page, which may be directly applied to an English translation of the text, the untraditional punctuation used in *L'esprit des mots* is somewhat problematic when translating it into English because it interferes with the clarity of communication. For example, there are a significant number of sentence fragments in the original French text. Although formally, sentence fragments are grammatically incorrect, in some cases they serve as poetic tools since they suggest moments of spontaneous thought. An example of this occurs in the section "Les mots simples" after the sentence "J'aurais aimé être écrivain" (Monchaux, 7), where Monchaux writes: "Ne plus être poète sans poèmes, romancier sans romans. Ajouter les mots aux mots, dans une harmonie de sons, une richesse de pensée, une élégance du phrasé" (Monchaux, 7). This section was easily translated into English punctuation-wise: "No longer a poet without poems, a novelist without novels. Words on top of words: harmony of tone, richness of imagery, elegance of expression." However the following sentence fragment, "Déceptions, ruptures, chagrins insurmontables, mais vite oubliés et remplacés par d'autres rêves enchanteurs, d'autres serments échangés, qui devenaient promesses de félicité avec, en signe de pacte éternel, les initiales enlacées, gravées dans l'encorce d'un arbre" (Monchaux, 39), seems to be more effective in English when broken into smaller segments as follows : "Dishonesty, breakups, and consuming worries eat away at us. However, before

long they're forgotten and replaced by other romantic dreams. We exchange vows that become promises of happiness. Intertwined initials carved into the bark of a tree are a sign of 'true love forever'." By breaking the French phrase into segments when it's translated into English, the idea becomes easier to follow, and simultaneously, the poetic-sounding fragment is maintained in the first part of the sentence.

Monchaux's *L'esprit des mots* is defined by its unique poetic style, which incorporates plays on words and sonorous aspects of the French language in conjunction with a discussion of culturally significant words. Although there are a number of elements in the text that result in limitations in the realm of translation, by finding English parallels to French expressions as opposed to equivalents, the author's poetic style and appreciation for words is transferred beyond the cultural borders that separate the languages. By emphasizing the value of abstract and concrete words in terms of precious elements through her vignettes, Monchaux successfully exposes the richness of the French language as well as her thoughts concerning French culture, which, in essence, exposes the potential for freedom through writing.

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Part II

The Spirit of Words

An English Translation of

L'esprit des mots by Marie-Paule Monchaux

Potpourri and Plays on Words

Polluted words have created a hole in our ozone layer.

Nourishing words have poisoned our diets.

Political words have turned laissez-faire government into exactly that.

Money is the root of all evil.

Through indirection, crossword puzzles provide us with direction.

Inventive words should create a remote to fast-forward through commercials.

Industrial words should produce placebo drugs and smokeless cigarettes.

Words seen through rose-coloured glasses can also get depressed.

Heartfelt words are double-edged swords that may be used against us.

Even Wall Street uses street words.

Motives do nothing less than define our sense of style.

Although the early-bird catches the worm, we're still better late than never.

Four letter words have been downsized to one letter.

The more uncool words age, the hotter they become.

When spoken with flair, even ugly words are ravishing.

Maupassant prefers short stories: nothing more and nothing less.

Royal words, *In Search of Proust*, lay in vain.

Railing words do not fortify morals.

Words of love are the swords of lovers.

Simple Words

How I long to be a writer. No longer a poet without poems, a novelist without novels. Words on top of words: harmony of tone, richness of imagery, elegance of expression. Simple and beautiful words, filed in our memory, flowing from our soul. Everyday words become so familiar that we are estranged from their inherent beauty. They're music to our ears, although we fail to appreciate their gentle song. Alone, or in phrases, they dance so delicately, deliciously, intensely that they sing within our being and bring our spirit to life.

Then there is punctuation, the orchestrating conductor of the sentence that makes us catch our breath when we get carried away in the momentum of a story. Punctuation forces us to slow down, take a break, smell the sweetness of the words, consider the fragility of their forms. It demands that we pause as we fly from one sentence to another with eager anticipation. Taking our time, taking the time to sketch each moment of happiness onto our memory. Taking the time to read is to show respect for the book. A word is never written haphazardly. It must be given a chance to reveal itself, to show its worth, and to shine the instant it is discovered.

Simple words hold great intellectual and emotional richness. They're powerful yet fragile and are often misinterpreted or even mistaken for other words. They open the door to knowledge. Since this is all they ask of us, it is our duty to receive them and to use them wisely.

Foreign Words

Foreign words, those we don't understand, parade themselves across the page in all their splendor. They're amazed at our ignorance. Whether Chinese, Russian, Greek, or Arabic, they enjoy being admired. They're beautiful. We visually caress them, we follow their majestic lines that interweave and intersect one another and form arabesques, complex or simple, but always perfectly balanced and harmonious. It is frustrating to find them so attractive and not be able to bring them to life. We are aware of their exotic and bewitching song. The slightest vibration and the word sparkles, the sentence flickers, the text is set ablaze. Unfortunately, we do not know how to play this music, and all remains lifeless, hopelessly incomprehensible.

There are also the foreign words we have been exposed to but that remain useless to us as means of communication. They have caused us problems in terms of knowing their correct positioning in sentences, sounding out their pronunciation, understanding their characters, deciphering their meanings. Finally, after a fierce fight, they are there, tamed, and we're proud that we understand them, dominate them. We take pleasure in interpreting them, in modulating their nuances. We admire them—unless it is our own knowledge we are proud of. We are the master of words that provide access to a part of the world that is not us. It's the adventure of discovery, of knowledge. No more room for hermits! We must go out into the world, exchange, share, enrich our souls. Foreign words are the key to open our spirit to others. They put colour into words, music into ideas, taste into desires, flavour into culture. They invite us into their world.

Philosophy Words

Philosophy words keep their nose to the grindstone, peel away the layers of every possible idea, and endeavor to understand the why of the how. They search, take flight, crash to the ground, and clash with contradictions. But they always follow the current of thought to go farther, beyond basic ideas. To them, confrontation is a means of sparking a discussion, of questioning and challenging the mind to its utmost potential. Philosophy words hold within them a hope for the truth, a sense of wisdom.

Simple words lead to the creation of great ideologies. Philosophy words contemplate myths, preconceived notions, and universal truths. Philosophy words stimulate thought, causing perspectives to change. They transform the world. Sometimes they free us, but they can also enslave us. Philosophy words are sometimes victorious but are often scoffed at. They risk losing their freedom. They face exile, book burnings, and imprisonment. Freedom of thought is not universally endorsed. However, a certain level of enlightenment is important. Furthermore, intellect and tolerance are required to encourage and disseminate the importance of free will. Philosophy words are both self-contained and self-contradictory, self-accepting and self-refuting. Most importantly, everyone should adopt a personal philosophy that shows respect for humanity. Each theory has a right to be self-contradictory. Each current of thought and each school has its own character. Each should be examined without prejudice, with conviction, and with a sense of honesty. Open-mindedness defines the virtue of mankind. Philosophy words allow us to find happiness, truth, and a purpose in life through personal or social reflection, problem solving, analysing concepts, accepting differences, and blending ideas with the sole concern of tapping into the magnificence of the human mind.

Gourmet Words

Mmm! The very suggestion of these words makes us hungry. Words that whet our appetite and make us surrender despite sworn resolutions. Professional chef or amateur cook, everyone falls victim. Resistance is useless since weakness prevails when we're presented with culinary pleasures, delectable dishes, homemade specialties, fresh garden vegetables, dessert trays… And, of course, exotic cuisine and foreign flavours, refined tastes, intermingled spices.

The food-lover's insatiable appetite and the savouring of gourmet delights reflect a desire for fine food, although a greedy appetite affects our ability to truly appreciate these delights. Gourmet words are sensitive words that tap into these same pleasures: confections, sweets, spices, aromas. The presentation, the garnish, the table setting: each plays a critical role in the enjoyment of the cuisine. And when enjoyed in good company, the quality of the experience increases tenfold.

We mustn't forget fine wine! Words don't do justice to its exquisite flavour, colour, and aroma. Strong and evocative words. We admire its richness: gold, wheat, amber, ruby, garnet, crimson, brick-red, roof-tile red. We savour its earthy, flinty, metallic, red fruit, banana flavours. We refer to its bouquet, its fruitiness. We say it has body, call it rich, strong, light, sweet, intoxicating, velvety. And, a noteworthy detail, wine's aroma can be tasted! Fine wine is a muse that inspires the poet within our soul.

For old time's sake, let's think back to after-school visits to the candy store. The candy names still make our mouth water: snowballs, liquorice, toffee,

peppermint sticks, jawbreakers, marshmallows. And the special Sunday pastries, a weekly treat, fresh from the bakery, carefully boxed and tied up with a bright ribbon that's quickly untied and before we know it they're gone… (The week crawls by when you're waiting for Sunday!)

How wonderful it is to surrender to sweet delights that soothe our body and soul by briefly allowing us to forget life's worries and cares. Such pleasures brighten our lives with moments of happiness: sources of delicious and meaningful memories.

Deceptive Words

Deceptive words make us believe that life is beautiful, that everything's for the best in this best of all possible worlds, as the old adage goes. They hypnotize us; therefore, we must be careful since they may easily trick us, deceive us. They play with our mind by promising happiness, then they take advantage of our trust as they capture, invade, possess us. They blindside us, fool us, and we don't object. We need to be reassured that the life we know is real, that people are kind-hearted, noble, wise, that nature is peaceful, protective, and generous. Deceptive words are skilled at concealing, omitting, disguising. They mask ugliness, beautify stupidity, and veil cruelty to convince us that all is fine and that superficial happiness will lead us to the fountain of youth. Deceptive words lull our suspicions only to turn around and stab us in the back.

Hypocritical, insulting, and pretentious words are blinded by their own ignorance as they arrogantly call others fools. They never see the shock wave they create before the consequences come back to haunt them.

Lying words are violent. They are shrouded in flattery, promises, and smiles; however, they're nothing but pretence, delusion, betrayal. The greatest traitors and the most terrible ones are the words we use in the name of love. They exploit blind trust and destroy it forever.

Silent words that muffle secrets, lie through omission, betray with cowardice and pride, have been treated as outsiders. All that's left unsaid, intentional or not, leads to suffering. That's the game of life. What goes around comes around.

Old-Fashioned Words

Evolution is out of the question. These words are trapped within their own historic era. They stand for another time. They've lost both flavour and colour. They're dying. They're gradually being phased out of our memories and our dictionaries. Outdated words with the sweet scent of the past, a not-so-distant past, where they had their hour in the limelight and savoured each moment of their rich life. They felt immortal, sparkling in the sunlight, and thought they would never fade away. They may have gone mad. Too much fame destabilizes the most resilient and annihilates the most fragile. The only thing left of these old-fashioned words is the distant echo of their history. They set a standard for good manners, refined lifestyle, and elegant language that no longer exists. They cling to nostalgia for this past that is so recent yet so different. They speak of another world. They no longer recognize one another in our era where they are manipulated and distorted. Different times, different words. As we create new words we abandon others. We play around with everyday terms borrowed from other languages or even create entirely new words to describe the original concepts we develop. Some old-fashioned words stay and enrich our culture. Many disappear as quickly as they appeared.

Sometimes old-fashioned words show signs of resistance, even though they're often slighted and ridiculed. But we mustn't forget that today's modern words will be tomorrow's nostalgic words. We have a soft spot for these old words because they hold the charm of yesteryear, a sweetness that gently withers away as it speaks to the heart of the wise and the soul of the spirited. We call them out-of-date, but they're old-fashioned in a comforting way. So let's keep them in the corner of our memory, because even if something goes out of fashion it can always come back.

Barrier Words

Barrier words reject our hopes, dreams, projects, and simple and great pleasures. They close doors, block passages, force us to take an alternate route, an option that can sometimes lead to adventure.

Forbidding words are slaves to the harshness of their use. They devastate children, make them cry, but also serve as learning experiences. Barrier words also overwhelm adults forced to change jobs, lovers, homes, or lives.

They're a source of deception, discouragement, but also an indication of new beginnings, of new and more enriching experiences. Yet to benefit from this renewal we must accept barrier words despite their tendency to crush our hopes, our desires.

There are the "noes" pointed in our direction but also those that must be directed at others. Tactfulness is key since we know that barrier words cause pain. However, we don't have a choice. We must either protect ourselves or protect others. For fear of hurting our loved ones or losing their respect, it is sometimes hard to say "no." "No" does not express hatred. It conveys individuality and respect for others. But there are also unfair, abusive, and malicious "noes." "Noes" that cause pain and destruction. They are a reflection of the dark side of the soul. "Noes" use authority, knowledge, and power to their benefit to crush visions, shatter dreams, and destroy destinies. They have the advantage of holding others in their hand, dominating them for nothing but personal pleasure. Or they are incompetent without knowing it, which can be an utterly hopeless situation.

Despite their intentions, "noes" are often received with a dash of salt. But when they're gone, they leave only a trace or are forgotten altogether. Ironically, however, "noes" are at times less risky than some "yeses."

Timid Words

Timid words spend so much time scrambling through their worries that they get themselves trapped. They can't express or assert themselves. Judgments and stares are torturous, and timid words prefer to remain unseen, protected in a safe and guarded silence. Then there is the desire of timid words to fit in with smooth talkers, who are so at ease and sure of their words. The abyss between these polar opposites is greater and more profound than the desire of timid words to be something they're not. Timid words imagine themselves as public speakers who don't stutter, blush, have sweaty palms or have a dry throat. They dream of erasing inner panic when under pressure, while their heart is pounding uncontrollably and sound reasoning is blurred, making them accidentally blurt out the wrong words, verbal slip-ups that lead to misunderstandings. In mid crisis, timid words are uncontrollable. Like a tidal wave, emotion is so overpowering that it sweeps aside everything in its path, devouring rational thoughts, gut reactions, and other decisions that would otherwise be made only after careful consideration. Suffering is incessant. They fear that they will fail to overcome such weakness. That's why timid words keep their guard up. They wear a false front, act out, bend over backwards to hide their awkwardness. Or at times they cocoon themselves in solitude and become cold and distant. Such shields provide comfort but paint a false picture of their true selves. No one understands the sensitivity of timid words, the delicacy of their so-called life. All they could have done but didn't do, all they could have said but didn't say. Where does this paralyzing and constraining complex come from? Can it be blamed on culture, on

their education? Timid words never know. All they know is that there is no cure. Time is the only source of consolation. In the meantime, confidence, friendship, and love soothe the soul by making awkwardness, hesitation, self-consciousness, and introversion disappear. But it must be understood that shyness affects outward appearance, not our core-being. Timid words aren't lacking in personality or intelligence. And if they don't speak, they undoubtedly use other means of communication.

Words of Passion

Words of passion are known for their intensity because they are both desired and feared. They make no compromises. Such words offer so much enthusiasm, whether emotional or intellectual, that they envelop the spirit with joy, elation, and a world of possibilities. But also with destruction and alienation, because first and foremost passion is related to suffering. The best example of this two-faced word is clearly the Passion of Christ. Unconditional love till the end. How many men and women have loved with so much devotion that they gave their lives for another person? Such passion often leads to jealousy, egotism, violence, or madness. How many relationships have withered away or died? Literature thrives on such tragic stories. Reason becomes obsolete, advice is forgotten and lost. Judgment lacks good sense, objectivity, and clarity. Words of passion become obsessions that dominate our existence and prevent us from becoming masters of ourselves. A hunger for power, elation leads to tribulation, sometimes to self-destruction, or even to crimes of passion.

However, words of passion do not only exist in the places where we find love. They can also be abstract in nature. Competition, driven by passion, allows us to recognize our true potential and the potential of others. It's the determination to achieve goals, a need to succeed. Devotion, a need for a philosophy, a homeland, a religion. Aggressive, violent, and blind, passion finds pleasure in the suffering of others.

There are as many true passions as there are words. Such passions motivate us to explore, to invest financially, physically, intellectually. To dedicate all of our time, often at the expense of loved ones and life's other riches, whether our interests involve art, cinema, archeology, animals, history, photographs, automobiles, or other subjects. The words all sense a sort of frenzy that sweeps over them and dominates their existence.

Words of passion are very intense. They enrich individuals by endowing them with strong emotions and unparalleled feelings of excitement. But isn't it better not to be dominated or controlled by an oppressive desire? Better to be free, independent, and master of the self? Better to have an open heart and mind, ready to benefit from all life has to offer?

Words of Tenderness

Words of tenderness are more fundamental than passion. They are tolerant, protective, caring, trustworthy, and reliable. Words of tenderness provide a refuge of love and friendship.

The kindness of a word.

The complicity of a smile.

The collusion of a glance.

The warmth of a handshake.

The comfort of a letter.

These are all signs of respect and common civility. They help us view life with our hearts. Words of tenderness listen to tales of woe, share happiness, smile at an elderly person, put an end to loneliness, provide comfort in a friend's final hours, and take the hand of a child. They are words of affection.

It's as simple as describing a mother's tenderness for her child, all the love she gives until the day they are parted. All the hugs, patience, devotion, sacrifices, sleepless nights, worries, smiles, encouragement so that this little soul, fragile and adorable, in time will become a compassionate grown-up.

Love-tenderness is less spectacular than passion but so much more meaningful, fulfilling. An entire life can be dependant on such honest and generous love. This signifies desire and happiness. Words of tenderness are voluptuous, tender, and sensual.

The gentleness of a caress.

The velvety softness of skin.

The silkiness of hair.

The fullness of a figure.

The feeling of a kiss.

The warmth of an embrace.

The sensing and sharing of excitement.

The finesse of a body as it quivers, trembles, and takes pleasure in caresses. The sharing in sensual pleasure, the compassion for a loved one, and the warmth unique to tenderness contribute to the true joy of living. Words of tenderness enrich life with their emotion and harmony.

The Colour of Words

The colours of words are rainbows and fireworks, exposing a beauty found only within light. The words may be bright or dark, vivid or calming. They may be solid colours or kaleidoscopic, monochromatic or multicoloured, or even flecked, mottled, marbled, rippled, iridescent, or pearly… Such a variety of rich expressions to paint life's diverse shades of meaning. Everything is colourful. Whether found in animal, vegetable, or mineral, colour is everywhere. It is within us. Using only three primary colours, light offers us a multicoloured world, a symphony of colour, a bouquet of happiness.

Colour-words are red like blood, poppies, rubies and fruit, but also like anger, shame and shyness. Red words turn scarlet, cherry-red, crimson, garnet or the colour of wild-madder. When they want to, they soften to a delicate pink. But when they get angry, they turn crimson. When shyness gets the better of them, their cheeks are lightly tinged with vermilion.

They are blue like slate, azure, sapphire and forget-me-nots. But they're also blue with cold and fear. They colour cheese, bruises, and rare steak. They change to mauve, violet or purple to offer the delicacy of lilac lavender to our senses.

Words of colour are yellow: gold, lemon, blond, saffron. They describe fever and mirthless laughter. They give us buttercups, honey, grapefruit. They put sunshine into our lives.

They are green. They live in plants, emeralds, jade, olives, and pistachios. They are almond green or sea-green. They are youth and hopefulness.

Words of colour are ochre. Yellow or red. Earth. Siena earth or shadow earth, natural or burned. Brick. The colour of clay.

They are the bronze and russet of autumn, fire in the sky, clearness of air, sparkling of water.

Evocative or effervescent, colours speak of our memories, our desires and our ideas. To lose colour is a bad omen.

The Solitude of Words

Solitude accompanies the cloistered monk in a monastery. Solitude delights in isolation that allows us to withdraw from society in order to find inner peace, strengthen religious beliefs, and come closer to God. It fulfills the reclusive hermit, secluded from the world. It appeases and nourishes retreats that are necessary to help us recharge, to rediscover nature and the self. It inspires artists and scientists in search of new ideas. Isolation is a necessity, a benefit, and a friend. People search for it and desire it because it is a source of replenishment and inspiration. Silence speaks to us and we listen with our hearts and minds. We feel safe within it. It becomes part of us.

Words of solitude also speak of those who feel they are accountable to no one and who cannot tolerate living with another person, let alone with several people, due to their egotistical or fearful nature. Those who wish to be free and to become masters of their lives, without restrictions, to evolve and indulge in the pleasures of absolute freedom whenever and however they choose.

"Consent" is the word that makes all the difference. It liberates us from the life that we take so seriously. Sometimes when loneliness is encountered, however, solitude is no longer a diamond in the rough, but an afflicted soul, painfully alone, who has been scarred by months, or even years, of unrealized dreams. The abandoned individual, whether single, orphaned, widowed, or divorced, remains alone with thoughts in the here and now. Words of solitude wrap themselves up in a cosy cocoon to conceal the lack of love in their life. They pamper themselves. They hang up on friends and family and are unable to

share in the lives of others. They intoxicate themselves with simple pleasures to escape the mundane depression of their existence. Words of solitude talk to themselves. They talk to their pet goldfish. The radio, television, or music is always left on to fill the oppressive, consuming, and chilling silence that feels inescapable. Words of solitude fill in the missing letters of crossword puzzles in an attempt to fill the void in life. We can even feel lonely in a crowded room since loneliness also exists in our mind. Loneliness is all around us, within us. Words of solitude are closer than we may think: in a neighbour, a parent, a friend. The people in our lives don't seem unhappy. However, it is their isolation that has led to their exile from society. Words of solitude don't play favourites: man, woman, child, or elder, we are all affected. They take hold of all lost souls, feed on our sense of despair, and define the lonely existence of the weak.

When we're young, we think it'll go away with time… When we're older we realize we're stuck with it. Solitude is an inescapable prison.

Words of Happiness

Even though words of happiness and words of pleasure are synonymous, their purposes are quite distinct. Happy words are more passionate yet less tangible. They're intense, rich, and satisfying. They exist in relation to people or things. They can be given as compliments. Uncovering them is an ongoing quest. They're a source of comfort. Our greatest fear is the possibility of losing them. When they abandon us, we're faced with feelings of emptiness and despair, which leaves us searching for some new nirvana. Happiness is within our reach as long as we know how to find it and are able to nurture it. We spend our lives hoping for it, pursuing it, requiring it, and we go to great lengths in order to preserve it. When happiness is shared with us, we experience blissfulness and feel as though we've uncovered the meaning of life. It's therefore important to be able to take a step back and critically examine happiness to ensure its authenticity. Sometimes happiness goes unnoticed or becomes so familiar that we lose sight of it. We seem to truly appreciate it only when it's gone. When it's too late. When we haven't taken the time to recognize it, enjoy it, or appreciate it to its utmost potential. Is it possible we're so obsessed with the idea of happiness that we just can't get enough of it? In contemporary society, the right to happiness has become an expectation. But not everyone places the same degree of importance on this word nor does everyone surround it with the same level of expectation.

Words of pleasure describe the moments of happiness in our lives. They brighten a gloomy day, turn a frown upside-down, and boost our morale. They're unpretentious, impulsive, and provide immediate gratification. They support,

motivate, and invigorate us. The pleasures we cultivate and the pleasures we simply experience, whether great or small, are the sunshine in our lives. They are an ice-cream cone enjoyed on the terrace of a café, a weekend ski trip, or a romantic getaway. Splurging for an expensive dress or purchasing the last electronic agenda left on the shelf. Visiting over a beer with a friend, dining at a restaurant, or going out for a spontaneous soirée. Watching a movie at the cinema, or taking a walk in the park. Small pleasures are simple and provide an instantaneous sense of satisfaction. They don't last but can be relived whenever we choose to recreate them. Their only goals are to entertain us and provide us with moments of pleasure. The joys they bring are countless and rewarding. Isn't each stage of our lives enriched by a unique variety of pleasures?

Words of Fear

From a mild case of the jitters to feelings of terror, words of fear cover a wide range of emotions. From a mere knot in our stomach to feelings of insanity, fear leads to a variety of symptoms that deeply disturb our being and make us seize up and tremble from head to toe. Whether it paralyzes us or forces us into action, fear vibrates within us. Its reverberating echoes trigger unexpected reflexes. When we're forced to react in the face of terror, our personal inclination to be either brave or cowardly is revealed. Fear exposes vulnerability.

Fear gives us goosebumps.

Anxiety prevents us from doing things.

Phobias cloud sound reasoning.

Hauntings petrify us.

Panic makes us lose control.

Anguish weakens us.

Terror drives us mad.

Whether it's a product of our cultural background or simply a part of our nature, fear exists within us and in some cases makes us vulnerable.

We fear unfamiliar strangers, freakish beasts, oppressive darkness, flooding water, and, understandably, the mysteries surrounding death.

Beyond the fears we face in our everyday lives are the fears that fall under the categories of tragedy, depression, and life-altering situations.

The terror of a victim who is screaming, fighting alone, and suffering through the horror that comes before death, while fleeing from an aggressor.

The fear experienced by people who are mutilated, violated, gassed, humiliated, starved, and deported in the name of racial ideologies and ethnic domination for no logical reason.

The fear experienced by those who see their lives flash before their eyes in the final seconds before a fatal blow.

The anguish of the seriously ill who know their time will soon be up.

The panic of the convict who faces death alone, waiting for a miracle that will never come, exhausted with terror.

Fear is ageless, genderless, and classless. It stalks us, its prey, waiting to strike the moment we come within reach.

Nostalgic Words

Memories allow us to revisit our childhood, a nostalgic journey where we rediscover an appreciation for our past, a past that seems to slip farther and farther away over the years. Good times take precedence in our memory, forcing bad memories into the background. However, because fantasy is blurred with reality in an intensity of feelings and a sea of emotions, our minds fail to organize our thoughts. They overwhelm us by constantly reminding us that we are not only a part of the present and the future. We're also the products of our past.

Childhood memories have the bitter-sweet taste of a past experience that has come and gone. Although this chapter of our lives has come to a close, memories live on our hearts. We're fortunate to be able to access these memories at any time. We travel back in time as we revisit special moments evoked through comforting and familiar surroundings where we get caught up in the happiness of being in the company of our relatives, where we feel the joy of being surrounded by the togetherness and the hardships that make up a family. We're able to enjoy moments of carefree laughter and playfulness, as well as periods of squabbling and sharing secrets with our friends.

Familiar foods remind us of our youth and stir the taste buds of our memory. Candy is so much sweeter when we're young. Given to us as treats or purchased with a little spending money, it had a perfect taste, unforgettable, something our adult palate can never know again.

Heading back to school with our collection of notebooks, texts, and new pencils is magical. Happiness and anxiety create a curious combination, and in

this alchemy, not everything we touch turns to gold. But, no matter. With each new year comes the joy of buying new school supplies. The smell, touch, and colours of these new objects inspire intentions of hard work.

Childhood memories include family celebrations with homemade birthday cakes with candles on top; Christmas with the Christmas tree, the nativity scene, and all the presents; Easter and the Easter-egg hunt in the garden.

Reminiscing about our first loves. Shyness, hesitation, and the fear of not being accepted are cast to the wind when we taste the sweetness of such intense emotions. The clumsiness of a caress, a stolen kiss, a secret rendezvous, a walk holding hands, and preserved flowers pressed in a book define the pure happiness of a first love. Dishonesty, breakups, and consuming worries eat away at us. However, before long they're forgotten and replaced by other romantic dreams. We exchange vows that become promises of happiness. Intertwined initials carved into the bark of a tree are a sign of "true love forever."

Memories of holidays are equally rich with feelings triggered by our senses and intensified by the hot summer sun. Familiar scents come back to us. Subtle or intoxicating fragrances of flowers, freshly cut grass, rain after a storm, and thrashed hay. It is also the landscape, flooded by scorching heat and glowing with colour. Siestas under the shading leaves of a plane tree, the rustling of leaves in the gentle breeze, the refreshing swash of the river that flowed at a constant rate in front of us. Melting ice-cream, sweet and mouth-watering fruit. A Mint Julep or a glass of fresh lemonade on the terrace of a café, shaded by patio parasols advertising Ricard. A bike ride with our friends. The swimming pool

and the roaring laughter. Bastille Day celebrations with a parade of torches, fireworks and a social dance. The freshness of undergrowth and picking the first chanterelle mushrooms of the season, hidden amidst spider webs. The sweetness and stillness of the night, when sunburns continue to heat our skin.

It's so good to have memories, even if the best come with the worst and everything we wish to forget.

Empty Words

Words themselves are not responsible for seeming empty. Those who use them are at fault. There are people who talk simply for the sake of talking, for the sole purpose of hearing their own voice. They like stock expressions that keep conversation flowing smoothly. They fill their sentences with emptiness, overflow their rambling with useless ideas in a never-ending flood of information that spills over and overwhelms our brain. Their conversations turn into monologues. You're there, confused, wondering where this person is going with their point. You stop listening to escape the chattering, your mind wanders, and your ears hear no more than random words, here and there, allowing you to pick out a few relevant words.

Other people talk so profusely that they drown themselves in their own words. Their trivial words reflect their anxiety and insecurity. The more nervous they get, the more they talk. They use the levity of words to conceal their innermost turmoil, and it works because all the words they spew out mask their feelings of helplessness. The whirlpool of words eventually makes you lose your appreciation for language. You begin to long for quiet. To prefer anything that doesn't involve speech. To seek out interesting conversation with a person whose words and concepts have meaning and are worthwhile sharing. To have the pleasure of exchanging and discussing ideas with someone else.

There are also the know-it-alls. In general, they have good communication skills, seem intelligent, and can talk at great length on any topic. At the very mention of a new subject, they twist it to make it seem as if they know

more than anyone else. How can they possibly have an opinion on everything, an answer to everything? They like polemics, debates where others are interrupted, with name-calling that leads to a funny comment and makes us laugh. How arrogant! They seem overly confident, like people who have no scruples and who want to be seen. Therefore, when they are at a loss for words in the midst of a discussion, they craftily change the subject and throw in a joke, in an attempt to save face. They overlook the fact that some silences speak louder than words.

Depressed Words

It's sometimes hard to imagine that beyond the rain and cold, behind every low and grey cloud there is a clear blue sky, so bright and so brilliant. That's the way it is for depressed words: they're slaves of their sadness, their weariness. They're confronted by the dullness they represent and have lost all hope of living a good life, so bright, so brilliant. There's a sickness that cunningly sweeps over them and gnaws away from their insides until the sickness settles in and becomes a parasite, taking control of their bodies and minds. Over time, depressed words allow themselves to fall apart. They lose the ability to fight back. They stop eating. Nothing seems important anymore. Some binge to fill this emptiness, which only makes them feel worse. But nothing does any good. They have lost sight of the meaning of life. They spend entire days sprawled out in an easy chair, lacking the willpower to get up. The engine that propels them is dead. They're enveloped by their all-consuming thoughts, each one darker than the last. Not a single positive idea can pass through this repressive shell. Tears flow. Feelings of worthlessness make depressive words cry. Subconsciously, they undermine themselves. They're no more than human larvae without hopes, needs, or desires. Life, death, it's all the same. Boundaries are blurred. Worry keeps them awake at night, reminding them how exhausted they are, while preventing them from escaping into the comfort of dreams. Words of depression are jaded, miserable, and despondent. They neglect both their bodies and their souls. They disappear into nothingness. They're paralysed by lethargy; their misery is so severe that they cannot express the extent of their grief and are unable to ask for support.

They're ashamed of themselves and suffer from the lack of understanding and frustration expressed by loved ones. People who are happy with themselves, who live beneath the clear sky, so blue and so brilliant, never imagine and never believe that others could be engulfed in such a state of hopeless desperation. Depressed words have no past, present, or future. But they're sometimes obsessed with trying to break free from the suffering that overwhelms, crushes, and eats away at them. This can last for months or even years before a patch of blue sky appears to restore life and colour into the world of the depressed. They must relearn how to build, share, and make plans. But they remain vulnerable. They keep a little grey cloud deep within that will inevitably grow whenever their mental climate looks like rain.

Words of Love

Love. Venus symbolises it, Cupid instigates it. Love is a universal feeling that unites people. It's the cement that builds and solidifies humanity. It overcomes barriers, goes beyond borders, and condemns prejudice. It's a passion composed of tolerance and respect. It gives us life and hope for a future of happiness and honest emotion. Love is a giving of the self and an acceptance of another self. Every culture and every religion requires love. It's at the root of all life on earth. Words of love are proud of their significant role, knowing that they're the foundation of such a noble feeling. They know how to communicate the honesty of emotions in a special way that sends a thrill of excitement though our being. Whether they're whispered, sent in a letter, or proclaimed in person, they make hearts flutter, comfort the downhearted, and make the lonely smile. Love is celebrated in different ways. Films show the many facets of human nature that are influenced by this powerful emotion. Songs and poems rhyme "emotion" with "devotion," "tenderness" with "caress," and "longing" with "belonging." From a simple novel, to a spicy romance, to a great tragedy, literature exposes the wealth of emotions felt deep within and explains how we cope when overcome with such passion. Love is everywhere: in writing, music, artwork, words, and our hearts. Everything done in the name of love is intended to make our partner, children, and parents happy; to strengthen and preserve friendship; and to experience the richness of this wonderful feeling. The virtue, intensity, and duration of this bond are dependant on two people. There is no love without giving and taking. Love is sharing. Love makes up the salt of the earth, the motivation that drives us, the joy of living, the beating of our heart, and the richness of our soul. Whether we're rich like *Sleeping Beauty* or poor like *Cinderella*, love is meant for everyone.

Humourous Words

Words have a sense of humour. Honestly! They bring a sense of lightheartedness or originality to a sentence, an idea, or a situation. They can also bounce back with witty jokes, always clever and perfectly timed. Mind games entertain with levity, vivacity, and skill.

For what it's worth, British humour isn't so bad. The English manipulate irony to perfection, while laughing at themselves and at farcical situations. The French, who prefer making fun of others, are brilliant when it comes to witty games and entertainment, which are always crowd pleasers. Finding the subtleties that make us burst out laughing is not a gift possessed by everyone. Only the exceptional comedian can unearth a joke at the right place and time to successfully strike our funny bone. Jokes, puns, and imitations are also sources of *joie de vivre*. Comical moments that help us unwind in a stressful world. Humourous words prefer skilled wit to complicated jokes. Some comedians possess this talent. They can put their finger on our idiosyncrasies, contradictions, and silliness by dissecting the everyday life of ordinary people. Through their sharp wit, humourous words create skits that expose the absurdity and grotesqueness of life. Unfortunately, not all comedians have good taste, and some are even vulgar.

Of all entertainers, humourous words prefer the mad magician, the poetic clown. Pull back the curtains, ladies and gentlemen, here comes Raymond Devos! He skillfully juggles words, ideas, rhythms, and laughter. With his bag of tricks, he makes something so difficult seem so effortless. He cleverly marries laughter with emotion and fantasy with poetry. He is a word genius.

Indifferent Words

Indifferent words are the lack of compassion, sympathy, and curiosity of a disinterested person, who feels that nothing applies to themselves. Indifferent words would rather talk about the rainy or sunny weather than bother engaging in a conversation where they'd have to show interest in someone else.

Indifference insinuates itself into everything, even into empty polling booths and half-empty ballot boxes.

Indifference affects those without official papers, the homeless who squat in rotten buildings, hang around in the street, live in poverty during the winter, and suffer serious setbacks.

Indifference to the suffering of others. Too close and it gets in the way. Too distant and it creates a sense of impotence.

Indifference to the cries of battered women and children. The screaming doesn't travel through walls or into their ears. Neighbours never know.

Indifference faces the abandoned elderly, at home or in a residence, who no longer await visitors.

Indifference to assaults. Victims can expect no help from witnesses who simply look the other way.

Indifference of school children toward their friend who's being bullied for his lunch money. Children try to ignore him by shutting themselves off from the real world.

Indifference to the fate of people who are exterminated or herded into camps, reservations, where they're left to die a slow, painful death.

Indifference to the misfortune of others but a desire for personal success or jealousy in the face of another person's success.

Indifference of smokers as they poison their friends, neighbours, and family.

Indifference to the extinction of animals, the ravaging of nature, and the pollution that's destroying our blue planet.

Indifference to our friends' worries that we circumvent to avoid getting involved in complicated problems.

Indifference resulting from self-centredness or habit, cold-heartedness or nonchalance, carelessness or insensitivity, estrangement or drifting away, or fear, all of which have the same consequences.

Nature Words

Nature words are:

Water: flowing streams, rolling rivers, uncontrollable floods, refreshing or devastating rains, and secret oceans. The changing colour of a serene lake, a broken reflection mirroring the shades of time, the silhouette of trees, and the stillness of a moment.

Wind: violent and destructive, hot and dry, cold and freezing, or a breeze that makes leaves dance, makes blades of grass tremble, and caresses our skin.

Earth: nourishing, rich, and fertile, or shifting, seismic, and eruptive. Colour of land and nations. Colour of life. Keeper of richness and, most importantly, our only refuge.

Light: warmth, destructive lightning, nurturing or burning-hot sun, fire with different degrees of heat and dancing flames.

Nature words are changing seasons:

Spring brings the songbird and blossoming flowers, and it turns the earth green. It brightens the sky, appeases the bitter cold, awakens the groundhog, tickles seeds with life, warms flower buds, activates laziness, and surprises us with its changing moods.

Summer ripens fruit and tans skin. It offers warmth, sunshine, crops, ornate terraces with flowers, makes flower gardens smell sweet, lets us put up our feet, and adorns caterpillars with wings.

Autumn brings invigorating rain showers as it steals daylight and blankets us with fog. It brings a crispness to the air, along with radiant colours. It denudes trees, sends insects to sleep, and leads to the departure of migratory birds.

Winter imposes long nights around the fireplace, darkens the sky to grey, brings nature to a standstill beneath a white blanket that muffles the sounds and hides disparities. It frosts, freezes, paralyzes, and gusts its winds, making little troubles more troublesome, solitude feel lonelier, and life seem more difficult.

Nature words are composed of fauna and flora. They're us, and they're the cells that are combined to make up other cells.

Money Words

It all started with bartering, and then money got involved. Then it became necessary to find words to discuss monetary issues, because simply purchasing things no longer sufficed. We created incomes, savings, and profits. Being rich has become an obsession. Anything can be used to make a profit: treasure hunts, gold rushes, colonization, and slavery. Money has led to disparity, has dug trenches between people, and has created misery. North versus South, rich versus poor.

Everything has become commercial. Everything has a price, can be bought and sold. Even water, air, and time. Humans are sacrificed without hesitation or remorse in the name of an 'honourable' cause. Always greater profits. Always increasing in capital. Speculating on the stock market. Loans with interest. Swallowing up small companies for increased personal gain. Money is a dominating slaveholder that we cannot fight. No system, whether capitalist or communist, will ever change that. It goes beyond all politics and beliefs. It has become an inescapable and inevitable reality and there is no possibility to go back. If you happen to feel a certain sense of indifference to it, advertisements bring you back under their dictation and motivate you to be a consumer.

Money was an ingenious idea, since dollar bills have no inherent value themselves. Money has become hateful due to the ways people have abused it. Money thrives on bringing out the worst in humanity and on tempting us to do evil: theft, murder, treason, pollution, destruction, and war. Money has become

more important than human lives themselves, and capital is a focal point in all levels of all the following domains: states, banks, industries, stock markets, sects, alimentation, medicine, media, weaponry…

If globalization is considered a means to improve the global economy, why aren't we pursuing globalization with an eye to improve humanity?

Lost Words

Lost words lie alone, silent, and anonymous in a sterilized room in a cold hospital. Lonely in terrifying and incessant pain that breaks them down physically and emotionally. Alone, they face aloof and awkwardly compassionate doctors, although they're comforted by the presence of a kind nurse, offering kind words of encouragement with measured cheerfulness, bringing a breath of life with each visit. Alone with their suffering, their fear, their sorrow, hoping to either get better, or die.

Lost words in the depths of cities meet at the bottom of a dirty stairway, in front of a smashed-in doorway, damaged mailbox, broken elevator, graffiti-tagged entrance, neglected yard, and wrecked car in a parking lot. The combination of aggressiveness and fear leads to a deadly silence. Carelessness and feelings of abandonment lead to bitterness and self-renunciation. For some, feelings of rebellion build up inside and throw away this life without goals, without dreams. The downward spiral of violence is looming and will inevitably persist if nothing is done to break this infernal cycle.

Lost words in the depths of orphanages wallow in their misery. Alone in a crowded room, they turn in circles, hit their head against the wall, and lose themselves in the comfort of their imagination. Alone, with no past, music, games, hugs, or love. Emptiness in their eyes, a faded smile, empty hands, and a body that won't grow. These words don't know the meaning of fun. They're in search of what they lost: a womb that's safe and warm, and the familiar scent of tender loving arms.

Words lost in the roughness of the street have but one priority: survival. Street children gather together in groups of two, three, or a gang to make a family and feel a sense of solidarity. They establish a world filled with their own sets of values, rules, and norms. Stealing, prostitution, rummaging through garbage, everything is worthwhile when it's a question of survival. Life is lived one day at a time. Resourcefulness and aggression are their underlying assets. The only thing that really matters in their lives is staying alive.

Words lost in prison waste away: deprivation of freedom is a serious punishment. It's futile to exacerbate it with inhumane conditions. Promiscuity in small, dirty, cells, unsanitary and without privacy, demeans the prisoner and takes away self-respect and the respect of others. Bullies laying down the law, gangland killings, assaults, hazing, humiliation, the suffering of this daily existence make this place a hell where people need to adapt in order to survive, or die. Prisoners yearn for visitations and occasional activities, since they briefly interrupt loneliness, desperation, and feelings of abandonment and worthlessness. These living conditions harden the tough, pervert the vulnerable, and destroy the weak. Getting out, leaving, regaining freedom is the only hope that makes life worth living.

Tearful Words

Tears roll gently painting sparkling streams down our cheeks. A darting hand vainly attempts to wipe them away. Warm and transparent, they're drops of emotion, the salt of the body.

Tears if joy flow when a joyous occasion is celebrated, a wish is granted, a pleasant surprise is given, or happiness is found.

Tears of sadness are shed shamelessly and unconstrained, releasing an overflow of afflictions. Harassment, suffering, and unhappiness pour despair from us like a flood; breaking waves, salvaging seas.

Tears of children, powerful and plenty, disquieted by sobbing, flood the world with their sorrow.

Tears within us flow silently and subtly in our distressed unconscious.

Dry tears cry uncontrollably.

Tears of sap bead on plants in a pearly seepage. Playing out a silenced suffering.

Tears of wine hang on to the inside of a glass with sensual pleasure and lassitude.

Tears of dew, cast by the night, wash the sunrise with thousands of crystalline droplets.

Tears of rain provide the earth with the green of life in a rainbow of blossoms.

Religious Words

For as long as man has walked the Earth, the most beautiful love story has undoubtedly been the story of Jesus Christ. He was a simple and mystical man, unconcerned with material objects, who spread the word of love and gave his life as a testimony of his faith in humanity and in God. He is a man who never said, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and who never yelled, "Kill them!" A man who said, "Judge not lest ye be judged; do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and you will receive..." How can we not love this person, this God of the Beatitudes who asks that we love our neighbour whether friend or foe? He teaches us sharing, tolerance, forgiveness, honesty, sincerity, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. He shows us how to build a sense of happiness within our lives and in the lives of others. He promises us life after death. He asks nothing of us and gives us the freedom to follow our own path, good or bad. He is ready to absolve us, to take us in, and to cherish us if we return our hearts, filled with repentance and humility, to Him. He's a God of hope and love who answers our prayers and acknowledges those whose faiths are uncertain. He loves all people, Christian or not. How could we not be drawn to such a God? And, if we doubt him, why not follow the path chosen by Jesus, who brought out the best in humanity so that humankind could live in peace and harmony? He brings such a revolutionary message, which has become such a spiritual treasure. Unfortunately the Church has negative connotations as well. Because faith is based on superstition, fear, and suffering, the Church holds an outdated and often unappealing image that is inconsistent

with popular modern values. Furthermore, its historical role has been less than inspiring (religious wars, Crusades, Inquisitions). How is it possible for us to kill, torture, and cause suffering in the name of God? Christianity is no longer valued in the same way that it once was, and at times is even disparaged. Our society is producing people who hold no hope, who cannot see beyond their own problems, and who have lost their sense of purpose. However, these same people do value spirituality, solidarity, honest relationships, and morality in the noblest sense of the word. Ironically, this sense of spirituality that we long for and sometimes search for in other religions or sects is not found because it remains confined to the Church. We must open the doors of the cold and dark churches so that Jesus' word can shine through, ring out, and live within our souls. Love shown by peers through help, support, and acceptance is the sole possession that holds any meaning to outcasts, the poor, the sick, and the dying. L'abbé Pierre and his friends of Emmaus, Mother Teresa and her missions in India are the best known and most respected role models. But despite the great number of people who volunteer their love and solidarity on a daily basis with the intention of overcoming poverty, pain, and loneliness, there are still other uncompromising religions, which undoubtedly have good intentions, but which make it a priority to impose values and beliefs on others. There is no reason for us to judge, manipulate, or condemn others… We should celebrate the fact that each of us has the right to follow our own path, should we choose to do so.

Churches are no easier to define than people. How can we claim to be orthodox, protestant, or catholic, all be Christian; and all love the same God, yet

be unable to get along? Fortunately, some commit themselves to ask for forgiveness, to disseminate Jesus' word to the corners of the world, and congregate youth by the thousands to celebrate in the joy of the Good News and to build a Christian community: true, alive, warm, and generous in its thought, word, and deed.

Racist Words

Whether deliberate or not, racist words establish hierarchies amongst races by making us believe some are superior to others. Racist words are a result of narrow-mindedness, fear of the unknown, rejection of the Other, and ignorance. They want to preserve their identity, emphasize their authority, and protect their culture. Beneath the surface, each one of us has a certain degree of racist tendency, which we may either easily choose to suppress, try to justify, or allow to subsist. Racism conveys a rejection of the Other and manifests itself through indifference, suspicion, or violence. Discrimination, segregation, apartheid, and words of hate, intolerance, injustice, and aggression. Racist words are ingrained within every culture and every community. They plague even the most remote areas imaginable, developing people's fears by promoting notions of violence. It's easy to understand why minorities seek the company of people like themselves in an attempt to feel stronger by coming together to form a community where they can live under their own laws. Integration can only be implemented gradually, once we have become acquainted with and accept new customs. This works especially well when we feel accepted in our workplace, in social situations, and at school. Racism finds pleasure in discrimination based on family names, distinct features, skin colour, or religion. Racist words feel that the Other is outside the perceived norm of human dimension. Racist words close doors before discovering the value of the Other. By closing Otherness away, racist words run the risk of destroying the Other.

Racism, whether it's subtle or involuntary (like a remark blurted out thoughtlessly that is later regretted, once it's too late), is hurtful to our sense of pride, shows a lack of respect and compassion, and prevents integration. But, if we surmount prejudice and make the effort to show that we care about others, we realize the Other is made of skin and blood, love and hope, and joy and tears, just like us.

Divorce Words

When love is no longer around to smooth over our differences and when the joy of being together is gone, minor everyday issues snowball into serious conflicts. When a couple starts to view life through independent eyes, divorce words are not far off. Little by little, feelings of indifference settle in, and the complicity of the past relationship fades away and disappears while a cold self-centred character takes charge. The passion of the first romantic rendez-vous is forgotten. The tenderness and thoughtfulness that reigned for so many years fades to detachment, hostility, and contempt. Charming idiosyncrasies become annoying habits. We lose track of the fact that minor faults and foibles that used to merely get on our nerves are now actually causing our feelings for our partner to change. We avoid each other, no longer work on long-term projects as a couple, admit that the life we're living is not what we had once hoped it might be. Once harmony is broken, it's hard to re-establish a sense of stability because the invisible chasm grows increasingly deeper. From disagreements to conflicts, from quarrels to falling-outs, everything leads to separation.

Divorce does not imply only the breaking of a commitment; it signifies an acceptance that the person you used to be close to and with whom you created a family is no longer a part of your future. From this time forward, feelings, strong emotions, and shared happiness are memories of a life hidden within a photo album. The person who is left behind is left to mourn the past as part of a couple. This person must give up on the idea of a shared future and on projects that were foreseen in a world of happiness that has become a thing of the past. There is no

choice but to choose to accept solitude: there's no longer anyone to console you, to share in life's joys, or to play a part in your dreams. We eventually accept the idea of aging alone, laughing alone, suffering alone, travelling alone, or creating a new story with the hope of forever.

Divorce deprives children of the happy life that they once lived and of the presence of a loved parent. Divorce is the obligation to give up on the well-being and protection of a family. It signifies a breaking of the need for harmony and trust found in true love and to end a relationship with the person who once believed in love so strongly and so blindly. Naturally we get used to it. We're able to adapt. But such intense suffering and pain is either expressed or suppressed to such a degree that it affects us deep within.

Like the carelessness that defines modern society, the disposable marriage has become a reality. It's much easier to throw everything away and start over than it is to try to compromise.

The Wisdom of Words

In Greek mythology, Athena is the goddess of Wisdom, Arts, and Sciences. What a title! What's surprising is that she is also a warrior. Unusual combination. Philosophers have taken the stance that those who have been able to show that with a minimal amount of reflection, reason, and meditation, humans can accomplish great feats to advance the path to knowledge where authenticity, peace, and equality reside.

Wisdom was born from righteous judgment and an honest conscience. It does not come without hard work. It's learned and is acquired through the pursuit of a path rich with knowledge, reason, and tolerance. Whether a guru, sorcerer, savant, or philosopher, the Sage aims to expose humankind's worth and true potential. The Sage is a thinker, attempting to defend exploited minorities, social injustices, and oppressed rights. The Sage is peaceful, respectful, has an open heart and mind, but often falls victim to passion, hatefulness, and racism.

Some possess wisdom that comes with age. These sages are the memory, expertise, and common sense of society. They provide the tools necessary to recognize what is honest, just, and true in life. These wise individuals help us to progress on the path of knowledge. Unfortunately wisdom often comes across as boring to young people, when in actuality it is a very important mark of our well-being. We must take the time to reflect and to learn with humanity's best interest as a guide. We need an uprising to come from within to open our eyes to injustices, together with a great sense of equanimity to arm us with the most

effective weapons to secure peace: self-respect, respect for others, and open-mindedness.

Because it outlives hate, fear, and death, wisdom is either considered overwhelming or absolutely inspiring. It's an indestructible power.

Inner Words

In the depths of our unconscious mind, we relive the tragedies that linger from our painful silenced past. These tragic stories are secretly stored in our brain cells as ongoing reminders of the traumas we've faced. The denial, the suffering bottled-up inside us becomes our deepest secret to which holds us as a prisoner, and despite all the convolutions of our brain, this secret will never simply disappear into our synaptic neurons or the depths of nothingness. Nor can we expect them to fade with the passage of time.

Our subconscious is a like a spare tire. It's there to ease our mind, troubled by all the suffering that is too overwhelming to bear. It allows us to make the most of life and to stand up to our demons that seem impossible to overcome. Our subconscious is so well-concealed that its contents elude our consciousness, even when we question the mysteries surrounding our subconscious and attempt to understand it. But its presence is so prevalent that it influences our 'ego' and our day-to-day life. Sometimes, when our 'superego' becomes overly intense and assumes a dominant role, it lets in forbidden thoughts that come back to disturb and suppress the 'ego', then leave it with a guilty conscience.

Are dreams related to our conscious or subconscious mind? Are they an expression of our secret desires or our knowledge? Dreams must be composed of a combination of all of the above. In a great hullabaloo, the 'superego' and the 'ego' are combined, topped off by a bit of the 'id', which creates a complicated mixture. Consequently, our inner cinema is prepared for both the best- and worst-

case scenarios. Dreams have always been associated with significant poetic imagery, perhaps because they hold the mystery of the unknown, the reality of life, and the power of emotions. We are confused by the associations between imaginary scenarios and real situations. They delight or frighten, enable the unthinkable, authorise the forbidden, and do away with inhibitions.

What happens, exactly, in this inaccessible intimacy, in this tumultuous silence composed of forgotten secrets, crocodile tears, and repressed desires? In the depths of our innermost existence and in this unexplored part of the soul lies the enigma of humankind.

Literary Words

Literature is the art of fitting words and ideas together to create novels, essays, and other works that are worth reading, enjoying, and treasuring. Literary words are abundant and are often used in a number of works written by a variety of authors who compete to satisfy the interests and expectations of readers. Words are used to describe the real world, to develop the imaginary, to venture into the absurd, and to build suspense. They allow us to us reflect on our past, to dream, and they put a song in our heart.

The production of texts involves research and numerous revisions before the final product can be completed and proudly displayed electronically or in the form of a hard copy. Authors like sharing their stories. Their writing is rich with personal history, real-life experiences, wisdom, and imagination. Amidst all the books available to readers, great masterpieces leave long-lasting impressions in our memories, and we revisit meaningful passages that return to the forefront of our memory.

Statues of literary geniuses, resting on pedestals, revered, displayed in their glorious mausoleum, have a cold and chilling air about them. Their greatest achievements are so often overlooked. We feel that they are inaccessible to us. School is usually at the root of this problem, since it encourages students to learn all about, dissect, and analyse authors and their depressed personalities, which leads to misconceptions and prejudices against authors.

Literature is life in all its glory, complete with humour, love, rebellion, emotions, madness, mystery, ideologies, adventures, fantasies, and poetry.

History survives, lives on in books, and with each successive page, comes to life. A book is obviously made to be read, but it is also intended to be held, savoured, and heard. It must be within our grasp both physically and conceptually, resting in good company with others on a shelf in the library. If it happens to be carefully tucked away or hidden, it will likely become a part of the cemetery of books, cherished, but simply "out of reach," which prevents the reader from easily pulling it off the shelf. To keep a library dynamic, books must be moved around, given new homes on the shelf, or be introduced into a new subject area, a completely different location that is more open and draws the reader's attention. Good quality libraries appreciate fantasy for more than the fact that it transforms reality into confusion and discourages people from going anywhere near it.

The writer exists only with the reader. The beauty and the power of writing can only be brought to life when books are read.

Evil Words

Sometimes words are not enough. In some situations they remain powerless, paralyzed in the face of difficult situations. They're incapable of caring about the horror and atrocities suffered by other human beings. Whether it affects the body or the mind, the brutality of suffering is impossible to express through words. Consequently, silence becomes a refuge within which victims dangerously enclose themselves. Within this refuge, the nightmares we wish we could forget come back to haunt us just when we think they're gone. Evil words hurt us deep within our being by mutilating souls, torturing bodies, breaking hearts, and tearing lives apart. Of all the crimes that humans commit, the most distressing are those affecting children: abuse, incest, pedophilia, slavery, prostitution, and kidnapping. These words are weighed down with agony, blood, and tears. They define a reality but remain incapable of explaining the breadth and depth of the tragedy. Our modern world has not been able to rid itself of the barbarism that should be a closed chapter of history but continues to exist.

Evil words hide within the heart of suffering. They are silenced by modesty, drowned by anxiety, and face the pressure of loved ones who want to help but are incapable of identifying with such an inconceivably painful experience. Listening to a victim involves travelling together down a road of atrocities, which we often don't want to see or hear about for fear of losing our own sanity.

Scholarly Words

Originating from the upper classes, scholarly words boast an enlightened sophistication in literature, philosophy, history, art… They have an in-depth knowledge of different languages, famous works, civilisations, and ideologies. They always keep their wits about them while on the lookout and in pursuit of information or facts to sharpen their critical judgment, develop their knowledge base, and improve their analytical thinking skills. They're never caught sitting idle with their arms crossed saying things like, "Why should I care?" The quest for knowledge is never-ending, eternal, and inexhaustible. The tendency to always ask questions, to seek to understand the unknown, to accumulate wisdom in all the facets of knowledge is the sign of brilliant intelligence, a strong sense of determination, an extensive curiosity that's animated by an interest in humanity.

If this scholarship endows them with a sense of intellectual enlightenment, a perceptive mind, and a philosophical outlook, then they end up on the path of truth and wisdom. Otherwise, they can turn into self-indulgent tyrants, as history has shown many times over.

Scholarly words are also scientific in nature. They're knowledgeable in general, but they also specialize in particular fields. Their knowledge is genuine and precise and is acquired over the course of several years of study. Through their competency and their research, they contribute to scientific advancement. It's incredible to think about everything that humans have invented, created, imagined, discovered, and developed in so many areas of study. Based on the unfathomable potential of the human brain, it's clear that researchers and

inventors are only beginning their investigations and discoveries. It's undeniable that mankind will go far, very far, as long as scientists don't lose sight of their responsibility to the rest of the world. When it gets to the point where human embryos are being used as laboratory mice, then we'll have to determine where to draw the line between the importance of medical advancement and a code of ethics. Nevertheless, turning against progress is just as problematic as assuming the blind role of the sorcerer's apprentice. If ethics are not taken into account, scholarly words will take a toll on humanity.

When we embrace the virtues of subtlety and modesty we uncover a great sense of knowledge that goes beyond intellectual competency. Contrary to those who claim to have seen everything, experienced everything, and who generally do not know much about life, scholarly words possess the humility of people who openly admit to their ignorance in relation to the vastness of universal knowledge.

Disillusioned Words

When we begin to feel as if life is not as beautiful or enthralling as we once hoped it would be, we seek comfort in our dreams. People who are depressed or who have lost sight of their illusions leave reality to live on the other side of the looking glass. But because the grass is not always greener on the other side, disillusioned words prefer to be merely the reflection of an imaginary existence that is zealously pursued in through such distractions as books, movies, and television shows. Identifying with an imaginary character and living vicariously through him or her becomes an obsession. Despite the fact that this mirage is sometimes ruined by life's obstacles, the illusion remains indestructible due to the hope it provides. Disillusioned individuals feel that they are assuming the life of their hero as they see themselves living out fictitious love stories, wild adventures, and a glorious destiny… Ironically this fantasy could actually become a reality if the disillusioned didn't waste so much time daydreaming.

There are also those who hold on to a past that is long gone. Disillusioned words look back fondly on these memories, which serve as a refuge from the stress and the cruelty of life. They dress, furnish their homes, eat, and adapt to the period they are holding on to. They collect everything associated to this cherished time in their lives. It's a means of living in the present while remaining outside reality.

Others escape the mediocrity of everyday life by cutting their ties to everything that's real. They empathize with their idol, become obsessed with them, and would do anything to get close or even touch them. Disillusioned

words' entire lives are based on their devotion to a star who doesn't even know they exist. They're harbouring a myth, glorifying someone based on nothing but a beautiful voice, good looks, and a talent that has put them in the limelight. The celebrity and fame under the bright lights attracts the disillusioned and then hypnotizes them as through they were helpless butterflies. Their need for recognition and popularity is found vicariously through their idol. Why don't they try their own luck in fulfilling dreams? We're sometimes required to make the first move before our unforeseen destiny can fall into place.

Song Words

When *There's Time for Love*, *People* see *La Vie en Rose*. *Under the Boardwalk* they whisper softly, "*How do I Live Without You?*" When *All You Need Is Love*, you're *Happy Together*. You proclaim, "*I Will Always Love You,*" so the whole world can hear it. Then you slip on your *Blue Suede Shoes* and start *Dancing in the Street*. That's what happens when you're *Addicted to Love*. A *Hymn to Love* rings out, and you celebrate *The Greatest Love of All*. But, *As Time Goes By*, things change. You fall to your knees and beg, "*Stand by Me* forever." You worry, "*When Will I See You Again?*" And you make up stories, and then, to *Prove Your Love*, you write, "You are *Always on My Mind.*" But you prudishly or desperately don't admit to your lover, "*You Give Me Fever.*"... "*What Can I Do?*"...

So, to escape the pain, you leave, go far away, to the *Lonely Sea*, *Mount Vernon Far Away*, or anywhere. You rest in the shade of an oak tree, searching for comfort as you gaze into *Swan Lake*. You dream of going *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*: *An Island in the Sun*, or to experience the *Moon Over Miami*. You imagine the blazing *Indian Summer* or life *South of the Border*, home of *The Girl from Ipanema*, whose beauty will help you to forget your pain. You pray, "*Fly Me to the Moon* while I wait and anticipate the perfect season of *Strawberry Fields Forever.*" Perhaps it would suffice to remain *Sitting on the Dock of the Bay*, to *Put Your Hand in the Hand* of a child, to try *Skipping Stones*, or to see if there really is a *Man on the Moon*.

But nothing eases your pain; emptiness is *Everywhere*. You sense the *Midnight Flyer* soaring over the lake, *The Autumn Leaves* masking the stillness, and you know that, no matter what, *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*. You think of *Eleanor Rigby*, such a sad story, then hum *Your Song* while hoping to uncover the poet's *Stairway to Heaven*. But *Morning Has Broken*, people are *Waking up in the City*, and you think to yourself, "There are things *I Can't Remember*." The *Bullfight* is over, and you fall into an eternal sleep on the *One Tree Hill*.

Fighting Words

When we're left standing alone as a result of our own poor judgment, fighting words result in pointless conflict. Hostility, vulgarity, and inhumanity negatively affect our spoken words, written words, and actions, thereby enslaving us. Many are blind to this enslavement as a result of their material values and morals that have become obsolete.

Fighting words speak out against the commercial world, which displays elements of prejudice against each and everyone of us, imposes artificial meaning on our lives, creates false needs, complicates decision-making, and marginalizes our relationships with others. Advertising privileges physical appearance over reality. The consumer is often taken for a mindless idiot, caught in a game they can never win. Advertising is everywhere. By means of the media, it stalks us in our mailboxes, on the street, and in the sky during summer vacations. We cannot escape it. It has become a psychological pollution that will only worsen with time. The worst is yet to come. This steamroller is unforgiving, especially towards the weak and the helpless.

Fighting words contest against the coldness of gloomy cities and the depression resulting from the barred-up windows of subsidized housing. There's the repulsiveness of plastic garbage and other non-biodegradable waste that pollutes our countryside, mountains, and coastlines. There's the disgust of wastelands in the wild that are turning our earth into one great big trash can. The revulsion of all the oil refineries, oil residue, and fuel oil that spoils our beaches with the rising and falling of each oil-slick wave.

Fighting words speak out against the moroseness we sense in the streets, in transportation systems, and in public places. People's moods are somber. Hellos are few and far between. Smiles are nonexistent. Drab and dreary crowds of people are masked in weariness and suspicion.

Fighting words speak out against violence in films, cartoons that mesmerize minds and absorb children's attention, the most impressionable people of all. Fighting words clash with the hooligans who call themselves athletes. Antiglobalists will give anything to support ideologies that resist intolerance. There are also the ecologists who destroy, break, and sabotage things. There are the cities ruled by ruthless tyrants. There are schools that have turned into real jungles. Terrorists disseminate death and cultivate hate.

Fighting words speak out against the lack of poetry in our world, a world that has become overwhelmed by the fast-past world of concrete, tension, anxiety, and consumerism. In order for the world to keep turning, we must promote dreams that are worth striving for. We must find inspiration in our imagination. We must be lyrical so that our emotions dance in harmony with our dreams. Let us be captivated and bewitched by art and beauty to make everyday life more peaceful, welcoming, and glorious.

Words for Children

Little Feather is a bird who soars fast and high through the crystal sky. He is lively, cheerful, always in good spirits, and has a big heart. He enjoys granting wishes to well-behaved children, consoling them when they suffer from heartache, flying to the rescue when children get scared in the night and feel alone on the dark. Little Feather sometimes soars right into the middle of a bad dream, making a child smile happily at the angels watching from above. He's also quite playful. Some of the tricks he likes to play include gently tickling the nose of mischievous children and making them sneeze, putting beans in the ears of little children, making stars shine in the eyes of stargazers, whispering magic words to the brokenhearted, and picking at cake crumbs left on the table because of his sweet tooth (shh, don't tell!). Little Feather whistles his favourite tunes, but they can only be heard by children who listen carefully. Those who take the time to listen to the sound of silence can hear his song ringing in their hearts. Little Feather is a poetic bird who loves and respects all living things. His very presence graces our world.

Little Feather is a mischievous little Indian who longs to find a friend. He's only eight years old, yet he rides horse-back like a grown-up and can shoot an arrow like anything. He rides astride his pony all day long in search of a human friend. But Little Feather is not always easy to get along with and is often short-tempered. He always seems to want everything right now, and he cries, howls, and stomps his feet until he gets his way. He gets cranky over nothing. He bullies other children, which stems from his bossy nature. Adults get

frustrated with his irritability, tantrums, and tendency to lose his temper at the drop of a hat. Little Feather has been deserted and has lost all of his friends, even his animal friends in the forest. However, Little Feather has one very special gift: he's able to speak to other animals. Unfortunately, he's so affected by his misbehaviour that this gift is of no use to him.

Do you think Little Feather the bird and Little Feather the Indian will have the chance to meet someday?

Perhaps. Little Feather the Indian has taken the first step. He has set off to find a friend. He noticed the empty void in his life. But making friends is not always easy. To make friends with Little Feather the bird, Little Feather the Indian will have to overcome his selfishness, his moodiness, and stop being so mean. Behind all of this, he'll discover that he's not the centre of the universe but a part of the circle of life.

Little Feather the bird will certainly help him…

Aged Words

To age gracefully is to accept that we're no longer seeing the world through youthful eyes. To grow old is to admit that seasons turn and this leads to wear on our bodies and our minds. Despite all the creams we could use to anoint our skin and possible plastic surgery procedures we could undergo, nothing can defy the inevitable process of aging process and its impact on our appearance. We must come to terms with these changes as soon as we start noticing our first wrinkles and white hairs. It's not always easy to accept changes when our memory is fading, when we're having trouble finding the right words to express ourselves, and when fatigue is setting in and is limiting our daily activities. Even walking requires an increased amount of effort and makes us lose our breath. Our eyes close involuntarily. Hours become progressively longer, and days seem to last forever. Sight and hearing fail us, thereby isolating us from our world. Our body begins to betray us, movements become awkward, and joints become less flexible. Our machine wears down and even deteriorates. But it is quite possible to be around to witness a third or even a fourth generation of happiness. The simple joy of youth blossoming all around us, of imparting knowledge to them, and of being looked up to as a loved and respected grandparent eases the angst associated with getting older. Just think of all the lovely grandmothers and warmhearted grandfathers.

But not everyone is fortunate enough to enjoy the process of aging. Some are affected by depression that comes when they think of days passed, and they shed tears as they remember everything that has come and gone, while fearing

what's to come next. Old age feels empty when we realize that most of our friends are now in the cemetery. Watching one friend pass away after the other and accompanying them to their final resting place is a difficult process for the individual who is left alone who remembers the experiences they shared, when they came together, became estranged, then were reunited. We must never forget about all the people in our lives who we have loved.

Often a direct result of abandonment, a lack of love drives aged people into an irreparable state of despair. Homes have become too big and empty. In retirement homes, promiscuity does nothing but amplify feelings of solitude. The hardships, the groaning, the muffled footsteps, the empty stares, and the sadness of smiles are all signs of an old-aged person who has lived their life and has no more hopes or expectations.

Some are physically dependent on others. Through their suffering, they lose their sense of refinement but maintain their dignity. Others live a life of psychological disorder where the past turns into the present, the present is an illusion, and the future has no prospect.

These run-down folks, so old and in agony, never cease to amaze us when we leaf through their old photo album and we uncover so many happy faces. We're amazed by their beauty, their youth, the joyfulness of immortal moments, and the happiness conveyed through these faded photographs.

Old age bothers us. It imposes the idea of the inevitable passing of our loved ones and causes concern over our own mortality and degradation.

The End of Words

Life is a mystery, and death is an enigma. One cannot exist without the other, like two sisters who go from being best friends to worst enemies then best friends again within a day. Life is generous. Nevertheless, it does not forget to try those who take without giving and show no gratitude. Life waits up on its good will, but the grim reaper is there, ready to step in at the slightest opportunity: negligence, recklessness, or bad luck. Death reminds us that life is fragile and beautiful. In the blink of an eye, everything can turn upside-down from one world to another without us even being aware of it. We don't even want to think about the precariousness of our lives. It's too frightening. If we did, we'd be forced to live with death as a travelling companion. It would surround us. Whether it affects us from nearby or far away, it's all-pervasive. Death does not let us decide when we go:

Peacefully, while fast asleep in bed.

Painfully in the hospital.

Brutally in a car accident.

Violently under bombs.

Nor does death let us choose how old we are. What's the point of being born into the world if we're destined to die as a child and to be robbed of all life experiences?

Sometimes life offers itself to death as a result of wear and tear, weariness, and despair. When the evil being takes control of us, corrupts our spirit, and convinces us to give up on life. When our soul becomes prisoner to a distorted,

tortured, tied-up, and frozen body. Then the fight becomes insufferable, inhumane.

Death steals our breath, violates our body, uproots our relationships, and separates us from our loved ones. It takes everything except for our soul. Life and death are indivisible. They complete one another, oppose each other, and get tangled up together. But all of this seems a bit over our heads, since we're only incredulous humans.

Do those who pass on mourn those they have left behind, or is it only those who are left on earth who shed tears for their loved ones? Perhaps someday we'll find the answer, once we've stepped through the door, hoping that something lies beyond it. We'll find out whether there really is life after death or whether there's nothing but death, which drowns us into a permanent state of nothingness.

Dream Words

In my dreams when I'm fast asleep, I'm often visited by a vision that rocks me to sleep. This apparition, always the same, haunts my nights, leaving me in the morning with a sense of happiness. A tree, beautiful, tall, and sturdy stands strong like a mirage in the middle of nowhere. An ocean of verdure, peace, and harmony serves as a frame for this solitary tree whose branches, rocked by the warm breeze, seem to be searching for lost time as the roots dig down deeply into nothingness. The tree's vast and cool shadow protects lovers and children and hides feelings of sorrow. Its leaves, a deep shade of green in the summertime, patiently await the first signs of cold weather so they can assume their autumn colours: scarlet red, bright yellow, or radiant russet. The tree strives to illuminate its corner of paradise. It shelters families of birds, curious squirrels, and tawny owls in its bosom. This mysterious tree, in this strange dream, reminds me of someone I know who looks surprisingly like myself.

This tree tastes like wisdom and smells like hope. Freely, it offers its oxygen so that life can breathe: its leaves feed the earth. And, when the time is right, it selflessly gives up its life. Its trunk is used for building our houses and our furniture. Its branches are used to heat our homes on cold winter nights. And the rest is used to produce paper, beautiful white paper on which someone will write, with black ink, words, many words, simple words.

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Part III. Translator's Notes

1. Verb tense.

    a. The conditional tense.

    Mona Baker states: "Rendering a passive structure by an active structure, or conversely an active structure by a passive structure in translation can affect the amount of information given in the clause, the linear arrangement of semantic elements such as agent and affected entity, and the focus of the message. However, one must weigh this potential change in content and focus against the benefits of rendering a smooth, natural translation in contexts where the use of the passive for instance would be stylistically less acceptable than the use of the active or an alternative structure in the target language," (Baker, 106). An example of such an instance in *L'esprit des mots* is found in the section 'Les mots simples', where Monchaux writes, "J'aurais aimé être écrivain" (Monchaux, 7). This sentence seems more meaningful and effective in English when expressed in the present tense: "How I long to be a writer." Consequently, it seems reasonable to change the tense from the original conditional to the active, present tense in the English translation.

2. Sentence structure.

    a. Fragments: bursts of emotion, collection of thoughts.

    Mona Baker contends that "[f]ull stops are inserted in unexpected places to force the reader to treat certain elements as complete units of

information" (Baker, 159), a tactic that is employed by Monchaux to create this very effect in her writing. Consequently, it is typically important to maintain this structure in the English translation. An example of this is seen where Monchaux writes: "Ne plus être poète sans poèmes, romancier sans romans" (Monchaux, 7). However, there are some instances where Monchaux's passages seem too long when translated directly into English. For example, the French phrase: "Déceptions, ruptures, chagrins insurmontables, mais vite oubliés et remplacés par d'autres rêves enchanteurs, d'autres serments échangés, qui devenaient promesses de félicité avec, en signe de pacte éternel, les initiales enlacées, gravées dans l'encorce d'un arbre" (Monchaux, 39), seems to be more effective in English when broken into smaller segments as follows: "Dishonesty, breakups, and consuming worries eat away at us. However, before long they're forgotten and replaced by other romantic dreams. We exchange vows that become promises of happiness. Intertwined initials carved into the bark of a tree are a sign of 'true love forever'." By breaking up the parts of the sentence, the main idea becomes easier to follow, and the poetic effect of the initial fragment is maintained.

3. Formality and technicality of translated sentences.

   a. The appropriateness of contractions.

      Mona Baker states that "[the translator] must ensure that the translation matches the register expectations of its prospective receivers, unless, of

course, the purpose of the translation is to give a flavour of the source culture" (Baker, 17). In the case of *L'esprit des mots*, Monchaux engages the reader through an informal, conversational tone, wherein, for the most part, contractions are acceptable.

b. The use of possessives.

There is an inevitable loss when translating possessives from French into English as a result of genders that are accorded to nouns in French. For example: "Prendre son temps, prendre le temps d'imprimer chaque moment de bonheur dans sa mémoire" (Monchaux, 8). I decided to translate this passages as follows: "Taking our time, taking the time to sketch each moment of happiness onto our memory," which seems to address the reader, an aspect that is consist with the original text.

c. Reflexive verbs and ambiguous references.

Mona Baker suggests that French relies on reflexive structures as a common form of the passive voice. She claims that "the frequency of use of the passive in languages which have a category of voice usually expresses a stylistic choice and, in some registers, may be a question of pure convention" (Baker 103). In other words, reflexive structures are stylistic elements. An example of a reflexive verb involving an ambiguous reference is: "S'emboîtent ou se contradisent, s'acceptent ou se refusent" (Monchaux, 12). I decided to translate this section as follows: "Self-encasing or self-contradictory, self-accepting or self-refusing," as

opposed to: "They are encasing or contradictory, accepting or refusing," since the first option better conveys the semantics of the original verbs.

d. Wordiness.

In some cases it was necessary to consciously refrain from translating directly in order to overcomes wordiness that can occur when translating from French into English. This helps to preserve the desired poetic tone of the original versus a fragmented conversational tone. For example, I decided to translate: "J'aurais aimé être écrivain," (Monchaux, 7), to: "How I long to be a writer," rather than the technically correct version: "I would have liked to have been a writer," (Monchaux, 7).

e. The use of contractions.

Although it was not always obvious when contractions should be used in English, generally, it seems that they helped to maintain the poetic flow of the text. For example, in the section 'les mots étrangers', the author writes: "C'est l'aventure de la découverte, de la connaissance" (Monchaux, 10). The tone of this section is best maintained by using the informal contraction 'it's' as opposed to the more formal 'it is': "It's the adventure of discovery, of knowledge."

4. Punctuation.

a. Use of colons and semicolons.

The use of colons and semicolons seems to be relatively arbitrary in Monchaux's writing. For example: "La souffrance est là,

continuellement : peur de ne pas y arriver, désespoir de ne pas réussir à surmonter son handicap" (Monchaux, 22). I chose to omit the colon in the translation: "Suffering is incessant. Fear of failure to overcome such weakness." The colon is counterproductive and even somewhat confusing in English. The solution was to cut the sentence in half, which resulted in a simple sentence, and a sentence fragment that responds to the simple sentence, which is a poetic structure that is consistent with the author's style.

b. Use of exclamation marks.

Monchaux concludes six of the forty vignettes with an exclamation mark, often in cases where they don't seem necessary. They seem relatively excessive, and consequently, they seem to over-emphasize simple sentences unnecessarily. For example: "Ils sont les clés qui ouvrent notre esprit aux autres. Ils mettent de la couleur à nos idées, du goût à nos envies, du parfum à notre culture. Ils nous invitent chez eux!" (Monchaux, 10). I translated these sentences as follows: "Foreign words are the key to open our spirit to others. They put colour into words, music into ideas, taste into desires, flavour into culture. They invite us into their world." By ending this section with a period, it seems more likely that the reader will take the final statement seriously, rather than be overwhelmed by the use of punctuation.

c. Use of plural in English.

There are several instances where the author uses the plural form when referring to people in general or to a certain type of word, and it is unclear whether the plural form should be maintained in English or not. For example, in the following sentence, "[p]armi les récits proposés aux lecteurs, les grands chefs-d'oeuvre s'impriment dans l'esprit, et certains passages, au gré des circonstances, nous reviennent à la mémoire" (Monchaux, 73), translated into English as, "[a]midst all the books available to readers, great masterpieces leave long-lasting impressions in our memories, and we revisit meaningful passages that return to the forefront of our memory," it was unclear whether 'la mémoire' should be translated as 'our memory' or 'our memories'. I chose 'our memory' because it seemed to address to the reader individually as opposed to the general population and opted for the same choice when faced with similar issues through the translation of the rest of the text.

5. Limitations in semantic equivalency.

Mona Baker states that "[m]ost, if not all, languages will have fields of distance, size, shape, time, emotion, beliefs, academic subjects, and natural phenomena. […] Languages understandably tend to make only those distinctions in meaning which are relevant to their particular environment, be it physical, historical, political, religious, cultural, economic, legal, technological, social, or otherwise" (Baker, 18). An

example of this would be the word *vibrer*, which comes from a more specific semantic field and has a different value in the English language system than is does in French. Consequently, it is important that this non-equivalence be accounted for in an English translation.

a. It was difficult to find an English translation for the French "vibrer" (Monchaux, 7), since the word "vibrate" seems to aggressive. Overall, it seemed that "dance" was the best alternative, since it maintained the visual image of movement, but it also suggests a elements of gracefulness.

b. Puns and plays on words: "Pot-pourri et jeux de mots."

It is nearly impossible to translate this section of the book literally while maintaining a sense of the puns intended by the author. Consequently, I considered attempting to find English equivalents for the French puns in order to convey a similar poetic style in English. However, as Antoine Berman notes: "[E]ven if the meaning [of the idiom] is identical, replacing an idiom by its "equivalent" is an ethnocentrism. [...] Of course, a proverb may have its equivalents in other languages, but... these equivalents do not *translate* it. To translate it is to search for equivalences" (Berman, 287). Consequently, I have attempted to establish equivalents by translating the French puns while simultaneously creating puns with the translations of the same French words in English.

6. Cultural-specific issues.

Mona Baker writes that "[n]on-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text" (Baker, 20). She offers translation by cultural substitution as a possible solution to this challenge. Baker suggests that "[t]he main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the reader a concept with which s/he can identify, something familiar and appealing. On an individual level, the translator's decision to use this strategy will largely depend on (a) how much licence is given to him/her by those who commission the translation and (b) the purpose of the translation" (Baker, 31). The fact that *L'esprit des mots* relies on the details of imagery and descriptions which evoke nostalgic memories in the reader, emphasizes the relevance of cultural substitution as a translation strategy when working with Monchaux's book.

a. French candies.

Based on Baker's discussion on the validity of substitution, it seemed most effective to translate "sucre d'orge [and] roudoudou" (Monchaux, 14), as "peppermint sticks" and "jawbreakers", consecutively.

b. French drinks.

Based on Baker's discussion on the effectiveness of substitution, it seemed best to translate, "un diabolo menthe ou un citron pressé" (Monchaux, 39), as "a Mint Julep or a glass of fresh lemonade," consecutively.

c. French tale.

Based on Baker's discussion on the positive aspects of substitution, I decided to translate the French "*Belle du Seigneur*" (Monchaux, 47), as "*Sleeping Beauty*" in English.

d. Song Words.

The section, "Les chansons des mots" (Monchaux, 82), posed a challenge in terms of equivalency and cultural specificity. However, based on the positive aspects associated with substitution, it seemed that the best option was to simply find English song titles that have similar meanings to the French song titles. For example the French section: "Quand vient *Le Temps de l'amour, Tous les garcons et les filles* voient *La Vie en rose*" (Monchaux, 82), is translated as follows in English, "When *There's Time for Love, People* see *La Vie en Rose*." The first two song titles are parallels of the French song titles, and the third title is the same as the French, simply because it has become a song title that is recognized in contemporary western culture in English.

7. Poetic quality of text.

a. Use of alliteration.

I found that it was important to maintain the author's use of alliteration as a means of conveying a sense of the original poetry. For example, when translating the sentence, "…l'homme est **bon**, **beau** et intelligent, que la nature est généreuse, **paisible** et **protectrice**" (Monchaux, 15), it was

preferable to maintain the alliteration in English, as follows: "…people are **good**, **gracious**, wise, and that nature is **peaceful**, **protective**, and generous," rather than use the phrase, "…people are **kind-hearted**, **noble**, wise, and that nature is **peaceful**, **protective**, and generous." Although the word 'noble' is closer in meaning to 'beau' than 'gracious', the fact that word 'gracious' creates an alliteration with the word 'good' adds to the poetics of the text.

b. Word order.

It was important to keep the author's poetic style in mind when considering word order. For example, "Mais n'oublions pas que les brocardent d'aujourd'hui sont les nostalgiques de demain" (Monchaux, 18), which I translated as, "But we mustn't forget that today's modern words will be tomorrow's nostalgic words." I was considering changing the word order to keep the word order more consistent with the French version: "But we mustn't forget that the modern words of today will be the nostalgic words of tomorrow." Although the second version is not worded in the way that the phrase would commonly be said in English, it has a more poetic feel, which is closer to the author's style.

c. Personification.

The personification of words is somewhat destabilizing for the reader. It is not always clear whether the author is referring to the words or people who experience emotions associated with the words. For example: "Foreign words, those we don't understand, parade themselves across the

page in all their splendor. They're amazed at our ignorance." In this exert it is not totally clear whether it's the foreign words that are amazed at our ignorance or whether it's the people who speak the foreign words.

d. Rhyme schemes.

I found that it was important to maintain the author's rhyme schemes as a means of conveying a sense of the original poetry. For example: "Inclinaison puissante, grande **jouissance** jusqu'à la **souffrance**, parfois jusqu'à l'autodestruction, jusqu'à crime passionnel" (Monchaux, 24), was translated as follows : "A hunger for power, **elation** leads to **tribulation**, sometimes to self-destruction, or even to crimes of passion."

e. Word order in titles.

It was not always obvious to determine the best choice for word order in the titles of different sections. For example, when considering "La couleur des mots" (Monchaux, 28), I thought about translating it as "Words of Colour," but I decided that "The Colour of Words" captured the French poetics of the phrase more accurately.

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